

Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration

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Burial Flags

Why does VA provide a Burial Flag?

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides a U.S. flag at no cost, to drape the casket or accompany the urn of a deceased veteran who served honorably in the U. S. armed forces. It is furnished to honor the memory of a veteran's military service to his or her country. Section 517 of Public Law 105-261 added eligibility for former members of the Selected Reserve.



Who is eligible to receive the burial flag?

Generally, the flag is given to the next-of-kin as a keepsake after its use during the funeral service. When there is no next-of-kin, VA will furnish the flag to a friend making a request for it. For those VA national cemeteries with an Avenue of Flags, families or friends of veterans buried in these national cemeteries may donate the burial flags of their loved ones to be flown on patriotic holidays.

How do I apply?

You may apply for the flag by completing VA Form 21-2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes. You may get a flag at any VA regional office or U.S. Post Office. Usually, the funeral director will help you. When burial is in a national, state or military post cemetery, a burial flag will be provided. To contact a VA regional office, call 1-800-827-1000.

Can a burial flag be replaced?

The law allows one flag for a veteran's funeral. It cannot be replaced if it is lost, destroyed, or stolen. However, some veterans' organizations or other community groups may be able to help you get another flag from commercial sources.

How should the burial flag be displayed?

The proper way to display the flag depends upon whether the casket is open or closed. VA Form 21-2008 provides the correct method for displaying and folding the flag. The burial flag is not suitable for outside display because of its size and fabric. It is made of cotton and can easily be damaged by weather.